

VZCZCXRO7379
RR RUEHDE RUEHDIR
DE RUEHMS #1016 3081345
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 041345Z NOV 07
FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8937
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS MUSCAT 001016

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [MU](#)

SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT TO ALLOW PUBLIC VIEWING OF OFFICIAL
DOCUMENTS

¶1. The Omani government recently promulgated Royal Decree 60/2007, authorizing the creation of the National Authority for Documents and Archives to manage official documents. Under this decree, the newly-established authority, to be temporarily supervised by the Minister of Heritage and Culture, is authorized to provide public access to most official documents 30 years after their publication. For those documents pertaining to issues of national security or court cases, the law allows public access after 60 years. Personal records, including birth, professional, and health-related documents, are available for viewing after 100 years. During the last week of October, the authority held its first awareness seminar on the new decree, which received only light coverage in the Arabic press, with no coverage in the English dailies.

¶2. Comment: The government's move to allow public access to official records is an important milestone for Oman, as the only government documents previously available were those royal decrees, ministerial decisions, and tender announcements published in the twice-monthly Official Gazette. Instead of heralding these changes, however, the government has been muted in informing the public about its newfound access. End Comment.
GRAPPO